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S. Korean Leader Makes New Overture to North

Roh Calls for Arms Talks in U.N. Speech

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UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 18—South Korean President Roh Tae Woo pressed his drive for an early meeting with his North Korean counterpart today by offering to negotiate disarmament and other military issues in the heavily armed and divided peninsula.

In the first address ever by a Korean head of state to the United Nations General Assembly, Roh offered several olive branches to North Korean President Kim Il Sung and uttered not a word of criticism of the communist regime just across the 35-year-old Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Koreas.

"What is necessary now is that the leaders of both sides who hold the ultimate responsibilities in their areas meet together without setting any preconditions. . . . I hope I can visit Pyongyang as soon as possible," said the former general, who became chief of state Feb. 25.

Roh's address, which was witnessed by North Korea's U.N. ambassador and diplomats from the Soviet Union and China as well as the United States, was his third major gesture toward the North. It followed a policy statement July 7 reversing the longstanding South Korean effort to isolate the North and

a proposal Oct. 4 that he go to Pyongyang for a peninsular summit.

The North Korean response to date has been cautious. In a statement issued in Pyongyang last Friday and distributed by the North Korean mission here today, the government's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland said Roh's drive for summit talks "deserves welcome." The statement seemed, however, to establish crippling preconditions, including abolition of South Korea's anticommunist law.

But other conditions the North has sought seem to have been met by Roh in his address. Roh proposed that he and North Korea's Kim agree to "a declaration of non-aggression or non-use of force," which the North also has called for.

Roh said also that the two leaders should explore "institutional structures for peaceful relations, mutual contacts and cooperative ventures and, of course, ways of bringing about reunification." This seemed to respond to the North's demand for a summit discussion of its "confederal plan" for meshing the two Koreas and a commitment to reunification.

By expressing willingness to discuss and resolve all summit issues raised by either side on "disarma-

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ment, arms control and other military matters," Roh went beyond the previous South Korean stand that negotiations on military questions should await progress in other fields. North Korea's central diplomatic objective, as evidenced in a variety of statements over many years, is withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea.

In what appeared to be a gesture toward the Soviets, Roh also proposed the convening of a "consultative conference for peace" involving the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Japan and the two Koreas.

On Sept. 16 in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev announced a similar proposal for a conference of northeastern Asian states on lowering the level of naval and air force deployments and activities in the area. Gorbachev named the same countries, with the exception of the United States, but the Soviet Foreign Ministry said later that he had not intended to exclude Washington.

The South Korean president, who alluded to involvement of communist as well as capitalist nations in the just completed Olympic Games in Seoul, welcomed what he described as "a forward-looking attitude in recent months" by China and the Soviet Union toward South Korea. China has begun to trade openly with the South and welcomes South Korean investments, and Gorbachev suggested last month that Moscow also may begin to do so.

Roh proposed in addition that a "city of peace" be established by the two Koreas in the Demilitarized Zone to facilitate family reunification, scholarly exchanges and trade. He gave no details.

By flying to New York and placing a number of conciliatory proposals on the table before the international forum of the United Nations, Roh appears to be increasing the pressure on North Korea to respond. This move may also help shore up his domestic backing in the South, where, he noted today, peace and reunification in the Korean peninsula are "the dream and passion of our younger generations."

An address to the U.N. General Assembly by a lower ranking North Korean official is scheduled for Wednesday.